

NATURAL SETTING

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Pocahontas County owes its early development largely to its position on the boundary of Virginia. Pioneering explorers discovered its rich valleys on their first short trips beyond the Allegheny barrier. Later, it became an important gateway for settlers from the eastern communities who pushed into the free lands of the Ohio country. [The county, in its geographical placement and contour, is quite similar to West Virginia, itself. Trim the northern panhandle region from a map of state and the remainder will be surprisingly like a map of Pocahontas. Like the state, the county extends much farther north, south, east, and west than its size would indicate. From 37 degrees, 40 minutes north latitude at its southernmost point it stretches to 38 degrees 45 minutes north latitude. Similarly it reaches from 79 degrees, 35 minutes to 80 degrees, 24 minutes west longitude.

Its more than 900 square miles of land make Pocanontas the third county of the state in size. It was formed from parts of Bath, Pendleton, and Randolph counties and was originally thought to contain 620 square miles. Boundaries, as determined by the Virginia legislature in 1821, were as follows:

"Beginning at the line of Greenbrier County on top of the Allegheny Mountain Thence with the said line to the head of Spice Run, thence with the said line to the end of the Droop Mountain, thence with said line to Fryers Knob, thence with said line to where it intersects the line of Bath and Randolph, thence with the line dividing Randolph and Greenbrier Counties, to the mountain opposite the junction of the Hancock Shoal Run with Williams River, thence a straight line to the mouth of the dry fork of Elk River, Thence a straight line to the top of the mountain between the head of the Valley River, and the point



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last aforesaid, where the road leading from Clover Lick to Randolph courthouse, crosses said mountain, thence a straight line to where the line of Pendleton county intersects the line of Bath and Randolph Counties on top of the mountain between Cheat and Greenbrier Rivers, thence with the top of said mountain to where the road leading from Slavens to Randolph Court house crosses it, thence a straight line to the top of the Allegheny Mountain opposite the head of the east fork of the Greenbrier River, thence with the top of the said mountain to the Pendleton line, thence with the top of the said mountain to the beginning."

The straight line from the Slavens road to the mountain opposite the head of East Fork of Greenbrier caused much confusion. As county lines were then, a corridor was formed cutting off a part of Pendleton from the main body of the county. Also, a "no man's land" was created adjacent to Randolph. After considerable dispute the boundaries were moved to the present location. Pocahontas thus gained a vast area of rich timber land. Burner, May, Gertrude and Wildell are lumber towns which sprang up in this formerly disputed territory. About ten miles of the Western Maryland Railroad together with attending operations is in the area. A few years later the southern border was changed slightly, giving the county its present area of 602,680 acres. As in the case of most land where rough terrain is general, boundaries were determined largely by natural barriers, streams, and divisions of water shed. The unfamiliarity of many an early surveyor with the wild country in which he worked forced him to rely upon prominent landmarks for his bearings. However, since political and social groupings were also influenced greatly by topographical situation it appears logical that the system is far more just than the arbitrary laying-off of orderly rows of townships and counties.

CHAPTER THREE NATURAL SETTING (Pocahontas County)

Beginning August 26th 1940

Roscoe W. Brown.

Part 1.

Sec A. Pocahontas County is situated on the eastern side of the State somewhat below the center of West Virginia, is adjoining the State of Virginia in the east, the meanders of the Alleghany mountains, and the watershed thereof which is the line between Virginia and West Virginia, forms the eastern boundary line of Pocahontas County except the north end of the County which is bounded on the east by Pendleton County of West Virginia.

Pocahontas County is bounded on the north and north-west by Webster and Randolph Counties, on the north-east by Pendleton County, on the east by Highland and Bath Counties of the State of Virginia, and on the south-west by Greenbrier County.

The Geographical position of Pocahontas County, or as it is oriented in the State of West Virginia, in reference to its position of Latitude and Longitudinal departure; at the High-School Building at Greenbank taken as a point as near as can be defined, is 38 degrees, 25 minutes, and 33 seconds of North Latitude, and 79 degrees, 49 minutes, and 30 seconds of Longitude from Greenwich.

The Geographical ^{Position} of Marlinton (the County seat of Pocahontas County) is approximately as taken from the Topographical Maps made by U.S. Engineers for the Geological Surveys, is 38 degrees and 13 minutes of North Latitude, and 80 degrees and 6 minutes of Longitude.

In reference to the Magnetic declination, or the ^edelination of the magnetic compass needle, from the true North Meridian appears to be 4 degrees and 30 minutes of West Declination, with an annual change of 3 minutes per year.

(All the U.S. Government surveys are based on the True North Meridian, all the local and private lands are surveyed by the Magnetic Meridian.)